

THE KHASIS

COTTON CLOTHS.

283 In the Jaintia Hills at Mynso cotton is spun into thread, and
 288 weaving is carried on there, but on a limited scale. The Mynso
 people weave the small strips of cloth worn by the men to
 serve the purpose of the Assamese *lengti* or Hindi *languti*.
 In Suhtnga the people import cotton thread from Mynso and
 weave the (*ingki*) or sleeveless coat, peculiar to the district;
 824 these coats are dyed red and blue. The dark blue or black dye
 is obtained from the leaf of a plant called *u sybu*, which
 386 Mr. Rita has classified as *strobilanthus hoeditolius*, which
 289 grows in the gardens round the homesteads. The leaves are
 dried, then reduced to powder, mixed with hot water, and the
 skeins of thread are steeped in the liquid. The colour is
 permanent. The red dye is obtained from the mixture of the
 dry bark of two shrubs, *ka lapyndong* (*symplocos racemosa*,
 Roxb.), and *ka 'larnong* (*morinda tinctoria*, Roxb.), the latter
 being the same as the Assamese (আচুকাঠ) *áchukáth*. The bark
 is dried, then pounded, and the two sorts are mixed together
 and made into a paste with hot water. The skeins are steeped
 in this mixture for twenty-four hours, then taken out and
 divided, and again steeped for another twenty-four hours. The
 Lalungs and Bhois and Lynngams all weave cotton cloths,
 which are generally dyed blue, sometimes striped blue and
 red. The Wars weave cotton cloths which are dyed red and
 yellow, the cloths being woven in checks. Mr. Darrah remarks
 that the cotton grown in the Jaintia Hills is said to be the best
 cotton produced in the province. Its thread can be more
 closely woven than that of other kinds. This statement,
 however, is not borne out by Mr. Allen writing in 1858, who
 says that the cotton is of inferior quality, the staple being
 short and woolly. The cotton cloths woven by the Bhois are
 called *spua*.

POTTERY.

[162] The Census Report of 1901 gave the number of persons who
 323 are supported by the manufacture of pottery at 54 only.
 Pottery is manufactured at one place only in the Jaintia Hills,

211 which a figure, evidently of a Hindu god, has been carved, without
171 doubt after the erection of the stone. Here we have a striking
parallel case to the painted and carved menhir near Tregastel
in Brittany, upon which has been carved the representation of
a crucifix. There are also some carved stones near Nartiang
(said to represent two women) called *mawthawdur briew*.

211 The Khasis say that these great stones were brought
483 sometimes from considerable distances. - After being hewn,
283 the stones were laid on a large, wooden trolley and dragged
across country by means of ropes of cane, of which plenty
can be had from the Wair country on the southern side of
the district, and then placed in position by means of ropes
and levers. It seems little short of marvellous that
these stones, which sometimes weighed many tons, were
placed in position by such primitive means, especially when
we consider the great trouble there was to re-erect one of
the fallen stones at Stonehenge lately. Nowadays only com-
paratively small stones are erected, which are generally hewn
and erected on the spot, so that there is no necessity for any
conveyance.

000 In conclusion, it may be remarked that the subject of the
Khasi monoliths is in reality a large one, on which a great deal
could be written, but owing to considerations of space it
has been found necessary to compress the account within its
present limits.

FESTIVITIES, DOMESTIC AND TRIBAL.

535 Dancing forms the principal part of all the Khasi festivities,
776 and is an important adjunct of some of their religious
796 ceremonies. One of the greatest festivals in the Khasi Hills is
789 the Nongkrem dance; it may be said to be as important
782 an event to the Khasis as the *Beh dieng-khlam* festivities are to
the Syntengs.

The Nongkrem dance is really part of what is known as the
pom-bleng, or goat-killing ceremony, performed by the Siem of
Khyrim (or Nongkrem) with the aid of his *soh-blei* (high priest)
and the various *lyngdohs* (or priests) to Ka Blei Syushar (the
ruling goddess), that the crops may prosper and that there may

411
•283 For making the string (u ksai) the Khasi split a bamboo and split a strip of it off which they smoke thoroughly. The string is uniform for bows with a circular notch; for bows with tapered points, it becomes thicker towards the ends, on which braces are cut from the bamboo knots made from one piece with the string. The kinds of bamboo used for the strings are called u spit, u skhen and u siej-lieh by the Khasi. Bast string, twisted many times, is also used for the string. The bamboo strings are smoked (see above).¹ The strings obtained thus are extremely strong and can stand great tension. With a bow of 150 centimeters the height of the arc, i.e., the span of a strung bow amounts to 10 to 12 centimeters. Often, however, the string is almost the length of the bow and no arc results. When shooting the arc is increased by tightening the string to 60 centimeters. Thus the bow is a powerful, mighty [610] sling, which sends off the arrow without any mechanism other than pulling back the string and moving back the bent bamboo. (7)

- 411
284
7. Bow As, 108, b, has a bamboo string with 5 knots, the shiny side facing inward. The string is 4 millimeters wide in the middle and 7 millimeters wide at the ends. At each end there is a brace cut out of a piece with the string. The string is fastened to the indented tips by means of a threefold bamboo lace (u thri). The string and the bamboo lace are fastened by a strip of bamboo 3 millimeters wide. Illustration I, fig. 1a, height of the arc 9 centimeters,

7 [See category 116, p. 4--Analyst]

children, but Christian influence has eradicated or driven underground the consumption by women and children. **Industrial arts.** The only industrial arts traditionally practiced in all households were a rudimentary carpentry and a simple utilitarian basketry. Other arts were few, and were practiced as village specialties: the washing and smelting of iron ore and the forging of hoes, daos, knives, swords, and cooking pots (upland Khasis); the spinning of cotton thread (Mynso village, Jaintia); the dyeing of cotton thread and the weaving of cloth (Jaintias, Bhois, Lyngngams, Wars); the spinning and weaving of Eri silk (Khyrwang and Norgtung villages, Bhoi and Jaintia); and the hand manufacture, without wheel, of painted earthenware pots (Larnai village, Jaintia). Ironworking and the production of cotton goods have nearly died out through the competition of machine-made goods. Carpentry has greatly improved. An innovation of major importance is the sewing and tailoring, on sewing machines, of ready-made garments for both sexes. [Cf. Darrah 1896; C., W. 1832.] **Trade.** Khasi villages normally contain a number of household shops operated by women. Every Khasi also lives within walking distance of several village markets that are held on successive days of the eight-day week. The limits of market intercourse for the members of any particular village can be roughly distinguished by their naming the days of their week, which are called after the active markets. The exception is the huge market at Shillong, much of which is active daily, and which serves as a magnet for Khasis from all over the hills. The traditional barter has given way to currency in all markets. The small ones contain at least some local farm produce, plus other essentials like betel nut, and the food and tea stalls which serve as centers of social intercourse. The big markets contain not only regional produce and manufactures but also products from distant parts of the hills, brought for sale by traveling middlemen. There is also substantial trade, from the hills to the valleys, in potatoes, pears, hides, lac, cotton, caoutchouc, the wood of the sal tree, Eri silk thread, limestone, coal, ivory, bay leaf, betel nut, pan leaves, bananas, sugar cane, oranges, til, turmeric, and chilies. From the plains to the hills, there is trade in dried fish, paddy rice, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, matches, tea, sugar, wheat flour, machine-made cloth, shoes, metal pots, crockery, porcelain objects, coral beads, silver, and gold. Markets are important not only as economic institutions but also as centers for recreation (including archery competitions), courtship, reaffirmation of kinship ties with distant relatives, and the dissemination of information of all kinds. [Cf. Stegmiller 1924a.] **Division of labor.** Men do the heavy work, such as clearing and burning the swidden fields, caring for cattle and goats and driving them to market, butchering and selling large cuts of beef and pork, carpentry and mining, and driving and laboring on motor vehicles. They also tailor men's

276

177

335

285

184

[283]

[386]

[186]

[323]

177

178

[326]

[286]

[333]

[294]

443

444

[805]

[437]

[178]

[443]

[438]

[441]

[526]

[583]

[602]

[203]

462

[241]

[231]

[443]

[335]

[316]

[493]

000

Name of village (1)	Name of society (2)	Sponsored by (3)
7. Sutnga ...	(1) Credit Society.	Local people
	(2) Co-operative Trading Society.	
8. Darrang ...	Marketing Society.	Do
9. Shella ..	Trading Co-operative Society.	Do.

4.10 Cottage Industries.—It has already been mentioned that Village and Cottage Industries are not very popular in the district. 433

The following table shows the industries reported from the sample villages:—

TABLE B-9

Industry (1)	No. of villages reporting existence of the industries. (2)	No. of villages reporting production for sale. (3)
Cane and bamboo works ...	9	7
Blacksmithy ...	5	5
Tailoring ...	2	2
Handloom ...	...	...
Weaving and Spinning ...	3	1
Rearing of cocoons, etc. ...	1	1
Rearing of lac ...	1	1
Others ...	2	1

322
326
294
286
284
283
231

Blacksmithy and making of baskets, cane products, etc., out of cane and bamboo, are a traditional occupation. Weaving and spinning of cotton, rearing of endi cocoon and weaving of endi, etc., are in vogue only in the Bhoi area and the areas adjoining Kamrup and North Cachar and Mikir Hills districts. Lac rearing is found in the northern portion of the district, i.e., Nongpoh area. [184]

Except cane and bamboo works and blacksmithy other industries are practised in a very limited scale. There is thus a lot of scope for introducing cottage industries in the district.

224 ACCOUNT OF KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS.

243 the District, nor do any superior kinds of cereals appear to have been substituted for inferior ones.

THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF RICE CULTIVATION, in English and Khási, are as follow:—The blade as it first shows, *spch-u-kyba*; the blade when well above the ground, *la-thylleng-u-kyba*; the ears when first formed, *lam-mat*; the ears beginning to ripen, *byr-tem*; the ripe ears, *la-lih*; unhusked rice, *u-kyba*; husked rice, *u-khaw*; cooked rice, *ka-ja*.

262 THE VARIOUS SOLID AND LIQUID PREPARATIONS made from rice
[435] are the following:—(1) *U-kypu*, cakes of different kinds, sold at six
[782] or twelve for a penny, according to size. (2) *U-shiri* or *gáh-khír*, prepared by the hillmen as an offering to their deity at the conclusion of the harvest. (3) *Kadam*, fermented rice water, sold at the rate of from three-farthings to threepence per quart, according to the strength of the liquor. (4) *Ka kiad-photika* or *ka kiad-hdrak*, a kind of spirits distilled from rice, and sold at from threepence to fourpence-halfpenny per quart.

243 OTHER CEREALS.—Indian corn, or *u-riu-ha-dem*, is grown on homestead lands. The ground is first manured, and the seed is sown about the middle of April. The crop is fit for cutting in September and October. A kind of millet seed called *u-krú* is commonly sown with paddy on high lands. For want of more suitable land, however, this crop is often cultivated by itself on rocky slopes; and when this course is adopted, the jungle is first cut down in February and burnt. The seed is sown in April, and the crop gathered in December.

244 PULSES AND FIBRES.—Only two kinds of pulses are grown in the Hills, *u-rym-bai-klung* and *u-rym-bai-jid*, both of which are varieties of beans. They are sown on high lands in March and April, and gathered in December. The only fibre is that made from the pineapple stalk, which is largely used for making netted bags.

245 MISCELLANEOUS CROPS.—(1) Oranges.—There are numerous
[439] orange plantations in the neighbourhood of Cherrá Púnj, and the fruit is exported to all parts of Bengal. In the year 1876-77 the estimated exports were 9,400,000 in number, valued at Rs. 37,600, or £3760, at the rate of Rs. 12 or £1, 4s. per three thousand. These figures show a decrease in number as compared with the estimated export twenty years ago. The trees flower in March or April, and the fruit ripens in October and the following months. In some cases the oranges are allowed to remain on the trees till March, but